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Curios and Relics

Clothing Accessories

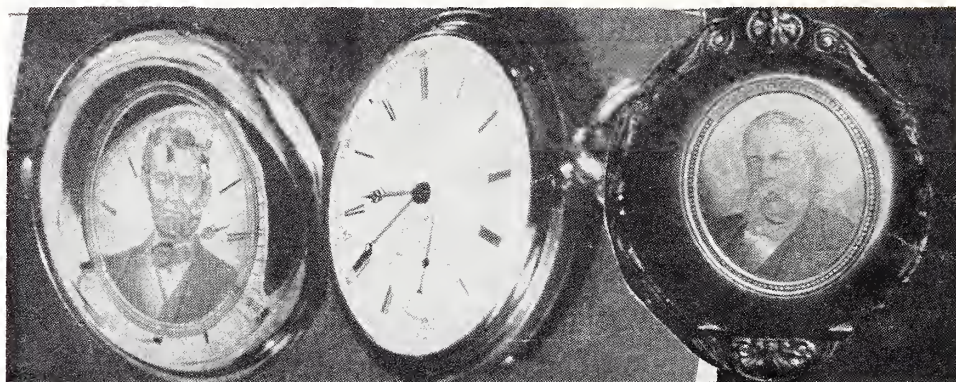
Watch

Gift from Abraham Lincoln to
Ward Hill Lamon

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Now it belongs to the ages



Editor's Note: In line with President Eisenhower's Gettysburg Proclamation of December 29, 1958, calling on the nation to observe the 150th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the American Horologist and Jeweler feels privileged to present this bit of human interest. Source material and photographs were supplied by the Lincoln Herald, published in Harrogate, Tenn.

MORE THAN 100 YEARS AGO, a tall, gaunt man with a faced lined with care for the woes of a soon-to-be-divided nation, took time out to express his appreciation of a friend with the finest gift he could think of. The donor was Abraham Lincoln; the friend was also his law partner, Ward Hill Lamon; the gift, a jeweled Swiss watch, presented on his 35th birthday anniversary to the man who would later accompany the 16th President to Washington and stay there literally through thick and thin as Marshal of the District of Columbia.

Now this token of a great man's friendship has become a part of the Lamon Exhibit at Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tenn. Inscribed on the inside back case are the words:

Presented by Abraham Lincoln to Ward H. Lamon on his 35th birthday January 6, 1853.

Preserved in its original leather-covered, velvet-lined box the watch is a priceless relic of extreme interest to any and all interested in Lincolniana. The watch, bearing the number 17065, was purchased by Mr. Lincoln from Tiffany & Co., when that firm was located at 550 Broadway, New York City. The price was \$460, and records indicate that he paid cash.

Like Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Lamon was a tall man; he was also a portly figure, and the

giant pocket timepiece was none too large. It is described by Tiffany records as 21-ligne movement made by Poitevin Fabricant, in an 18K gold, engine-turned, hunting case, the latter numbered 12153.

This timepiece would have been called a complicated watch in any era. For antebellum America, it was most unusual. It is a key-winder, stop-watch carrying four hands in front of the dial . . . hour, minute, and second hands, and a long sweep hand for the stop. With it came an extra crystal and mainspring which still lie in the original box. Because of its unique capabilities, it is probable that Mr. Lamon used his precious gift in connection with his official duties during parades and/or processions during Mr. Lincoln's administration.

Our illustration showing the watch open, also shows an engraving of the martyred president on the inside of the front case. This was made by a Swiss artist whose name is no longer available, and is considered one of the rarest and most unusual pictures of Lincoln. The model, quite evidently, is the Meserve Photograph No. 59, better known as the "Gettysburg Lincoln," one of the most used and popular photographs of the President. At the right, and engraved by the same artist, another watch shows Mr. Lamon's likeness.

